

**HIGHLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2012**

The Highland Economic Development Commission (“EDC”, “Commission”) met on Monday, January 16, 2012 at 4:20 PM for a Public Meeting in the Council Chambers of the Highland Municipal Building, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana. The meeting was called to order by Commission President, Matt Reardon. Minutes were recorded by Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro.

ROLL CALL:

Present on roll call included Commissioners David Beanblossom, Matthew Reardon, and George VandeWerken. Also in attendance were Mr. Joseph Hoobyar and Mr. Raymond D. Baldi representing Volkswagen of Orland Park, Illinois, Charles Haber from The Times, Michelle Quinn from the Post Tribune, and Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro. President Matt Reardon asked for general introductions and the Director provided an explanation of designating an Economic Development Target Area and Tax Abatement, in general.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SESSIONS:

Commissioner VandeWerken made a motion to approve the minutes of the Public Meeting and Study Session of December 6, 2011 as published and reviewed. Commissioner Beanblossom seconded the motion. **By unanimous voice vote, the motion passed.**

ACTION TO PAY ACCOUNTS PAYABLE VOUCHERS: None

SPECIAL ORDERS: None

COMMUNICATIONS: None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Commissioner Beanblossom made a motion to retain the slate of officers for the Economic Development Commission for 2012. Commissioner VandeWerken seconded the motion. **Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.** Commissioner Reardon will remain as President, Commissioner VandeWerken will continue as Vice-President, and Commissioner Beanblossom will serve as Secretary.

The Commission accepted the **2011 Annual Report** to the State of Indiana as presented.

Commissioners reviewed the information provided regarding the designation of 9545, 9553, and 9601 Indianapolis Boulevard as an **Economic Development Target Area**. The Application and SB-1 form were reviewed for accuracy and completeness.

President Reardon asked Mr. Hoobyar and Mr. Baldi to discuss their proposed project. They stated that the current building located at the above address will have its front taken down, the back of the building will be expanded, and an addition will be added to the south. If possible, they will apply for a LEEDS certification for energy efficiency. New and expanded landscaping will also be planted. Mr. Hoobyar and Mr. Baldi offered a visual of the proposed rehabbed and expanded building. They explained that the one major concern that they have is that the Team Toyota dealership will not vacate the premises and allow them to rebuild this year. If the Toyota dealership is not able to build and move to their new Schererville, Indiana location in a timely manner, Volkswagen Corporation may not allow them to locate at this site.

The Director explained the Tax Abatement benefit to the owner over the course of ten years based upon their proposed amount of improvements (\$1.5M to 2.0M). Ten years is the limit for Tax Abatement currently given in the Town of Highland.

Commissioners also questioned the use of local labor and prevailing wages for employees. Mr. Baldi and Mr. Hoobyar replied that the general contractor is local and all other employees will be hired locally for construction and for retail. Prevailing wage will be paid for construction. Mr. Hoobyar also stated that his retail employees will be well paid with wages averaging well above the median income. Volkswagen expects to hire thirty retail employees the first year and increase that amount in following years.

Lastly, the usual contribution to Highland's Economic Development Fund was discussed. The Director recommended that the 15% of tax savings (\$15,601 Net Present Value) be requested of the new owners at the time of approval.

Commissioner VandeWerken made a motion to recommend to the Town Council the creation of an Economic Development Target Area for 9545, 9553, and 9601 Indianapolis Boulevard. In addition, the EDC is supportive of Volkswagen of Orland Park, Illinois' ten year tax abatement application, the Economic Development Fund fees of \$15,601, and the hiring of qualified local contractors and local retail employees at prevailing wages. Commissioner Beanblossom seconded the motion. **By unanimous voice vote, the motion passed.**

BUSINESS FROM COMMISSIONERS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

NEXT MEETING: Scheduled on an as needed basis

ADJOURNMENT:

At 5:25 PM Commissioner Beanblossom made a motion to adjourn and Commissioner VandeWerken seconded the motion. **Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.**